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Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 18 September 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to agenda item 71, Oceans and the law of the sea, which will be considered during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

I am pleased to transmit herewith in that connection a document entitled "National environmental policy for the sustainable development of Mexico's oceans and coasts: Strategies for their conservation and sustainable use" (see annex).

The main purpose of this document is to establish a strategic framework for the conservation and sustainable use of Mexico's oceans and coasts.

The document sets out environmental policy guidelines aimed at coordinating and dovetailing the Government's public and sectoral policies by proposing a management model that is holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary and participatory.

The Government of Mexico considers that the information and conclusions in the attached document will provide valuable material for the sixty-first session of the General Assembly with respect to oceans and the law of the sea.

The Government would also be grateful if this letter and its annex were issued as a document of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly under item 71.

(*Signed*) Enrique **Berruga Filloy**
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Annex to the letter dated 18 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

National environmental policy for the sustainable development of Mexico's oceans and coasts: Strategies for their conservation and sustainable use

Background

In 2001, the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) established the Sea and Coast Monitoring Group, and at the same time made it its task to devise a strategy for integrating the environmental management of the marine and coastal zones of the country. The progress made by the Group allowed it to identify the main agencies involved and the main line of action to be taken in dealing with the matter. It proved necessary, however, to make more of an institutional effort to develop and put into effect a national sea and coast policy.

In 2004, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), evaluating the environmental development of its member countries, observed that Mexico did not have a commission or administrative agency that ensured proper coordination of the marine activities of the departments responsible for the economic sectors. It also recommended that the Government should make a serious effort in that regard, given the importance of integrated management of the coastal areas for the Mexican economy.

At the same time, the National Advisory Council for Sustainable Development, representing civil society, asked SEMARNAT to set up a policy framework for the coastal zone.

These actions and recommendations culminated in the formulation of the national environmental policy for the sustainable development of oceans and coasts, which established a strategic framework for their conservation and sustainable use. The national environmental policy sets environmental guidelines aimed at aligning and coordinating the Government's public and sectoral policies, and proposes a management model that is holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary and participatory.

National environmental policy objectives and guidelines for the sustainable development of oceans and coasts

Primary goals:

- To follow a coordinated, consensus policy on the uses of marine and coastal resources, which would lay the basis for those various uses together with an appropriate series of steps for the resolution of conflicts between the various users, so as to promote the governance of those areas;
- To design, develop and support a system of decisions and activities at the various levels of government for the marine and coastal zones of the country, based on the Government's participation in an ongoing planning process involving also the population living in the area and the economic operators and other interested parties;

- To direct sustainable development of the zone, as evidenced by the safety of its ecosystems, the protection of the populations living in it and their economic and social development, and the fulfilment of national and international commitments to the conservation of coasts and oceans;

- To take into account obligations stemming from international commitments concerning conservation of oceans and coasts and the law of the sea when designing and executing this public policy.

Secondary goals:

- To coordinate legal and administrative arrangements at the Federal, state and local levels that govern the economic and social development of the coastal zones;

- To put in place a legal structure that will serve the integrated management of the coastal zone, in keeping with the new public policy conception, vision and purposes;

- To arrive at an apportionment and decentralization of the management of the coastal zone so as to further the sustainable management aims of the policy.

In order to lay the groundwork for the achievement of these goals, the policy will revolve around six strategic focal points:

- Ecosystems and biodiversity;

- Production sectors and human settlements;

- Policy instruments;

- Regulatory and institutional framework;

- Information systems concerning oceans and coasts (scientific research, education and information);

- Governance and social participation.

Features of Mexico's marine and coastal territorial base

Natural factors

Mexico occupies a privileged geographical position, located between the two largest oceans on the globe, situated at an intertropical latitude as a transitional region between the neoarctic and neotropical zones. These features, together with its uneven topography, give rise to great variety of climates, environments and landscapes, which themselves explain the great biological diversity to be found in its territory.

The country has more than 11,000 kilometres of shoreline, distributed across 17 states and 150 towns, and an exclusive economic zone of more than 3 million square kilometres, almost 50 per cent more than its continental territorial extension. Although various institutions in Mexico have produced a great quantity of oceanographic information, the information has not been organized into a national database that would make it possible to integrate, and at the same time prioritize, scientific research and what is known about its oceans.

The coastal and marine environments are a big factor in the country's megadiversity. Some of its ecosystems, such as the mangrove swamps, coral reefs and marine pasturelands in the coastal zone, or the hydrothermal chimneys and cold seeps in the marine zone, are extremely rich biologically.

About 130 lagoon systems have been inventoried, with an area of approximately 1,567,000 hectares. These ecosystems can be described as areas of high productivity. They are host to a high degree of biological diversity, are sites for the reproduction, nourishment and refuge of species that have commercial value and sites for the recycling, storing and export of nutrients and sediments, and have great scenic value.

The main environmental elements distributed along Mexican beaches and rocky coasts are: sand dunes, egg-laying sites for sea turtles, internationally significant wetlands, barrier islands, a habitat for "charismatic" species or protected species, important biotic communities for the various ecosystems, and a habitat for shore and sea birds.

There are six recognized coral reef regions in Mexico. The approximate area of the warm-water coral reefs in the country is 1,780 square kilometres, that is, about 0.63 per cent of the total area of this type of reef globally. Little is known about the geographical distribution of the cold-water coral reefs in Mexico.

The coastal zone is vulnerable, to varying degrees, to the impact of a number of natural phenomena, especially hurricanes and floods, landslides and earthquakes. Chief among these natural threats are cyclones or hurricanes, owing to their disruptive effect on the population, the infrastructure and coastal ecosystems.

Economic factors

Today, our country maintains communications with the world through a broad maritime and port network. Mexico has a port system consisting of 107 ports and maritime terminals, 64 of which are deepwater ports, where 111 shipping lines, most of them flying foreign flags, operate.

Mexico provides about 0.9 per cent of the world's fish production, and its volume fluctuates between 1.35 and 1.57 million tons annually. It is estimated that approximately 269,000 people depend directly upon this economic activity.

Tourism represents the fourth source of foreign currency for the country. Mexico ranks eighth in the world in terms of number of visitors and twelfth in terms of income derived from tourist activity. That income represents about 8.4 per cent of the gross domestic product, generating a little more than 1,752,000 jobs. It is estimated that 58 per cent of the available hotel rooms are located in beachfront destinations.

Mexico is the world's seventh-ranking oil producer. The petroleum industry is a basic sector of the national economy since the sale and export of gas, oil and oil by-products account for approximately 30 per cent of the country's net income. Activities in this sector are conducted primarily in the marine and coastal areas of the Gulf of Mexico and in the south-eastern Pacific.

More than 90 per cent of electricity is generated by thermal power plants, many of which are located in the coastal zone. The country's only nuclear power plant is situated in Laguna Verde, Veracruz, in the Gulf of Mexico.

The chief industries in the coastal zone are the chemical and oil-refining industries, the steel industry and the naval construction industry.

The mining sector is not very developed on the coast and is represented mainly by the production of salt, limestone, sand and other minerals such as phosphorite. Other mineral resources with mining potential are manganese nodules and polymetallic sulphur deposits that are found in the exclusive economic zone.

Agriculture and livestock-raising in the coastal zone cover 29.36 per cent of the territorial extension of the 263 towns in the zone. While in the Gulf of Mexico dry-land farming is the commonest system (in 71.70 per cent of the farmed area), in the Mexican Pacific it is irrigation agriculture, in 58.59 per cent of the total area.

Population

Historically, the population on the coasts grew slowly and accounted for only a small portion of the total, however, starting in the second half of the 20th century, population dynamics have been affected by the creation and promotion of activities in the fields of tourism, oil, ports, agriculture and industry. In the year 2000, the population in the 263 municipalities making up the proposed coastal zone amounted to 22,808,068 people, representing almost a quarter of the country's total population. At the present time the coastal municipalities are maintaining a rate of population growth that is higher than the national average and higher than that of the inland municipalities.

Environmental problems

The rapid population growth and lack of long-term planning with regard to the development of economic activities has put pressure on ecosystems and their natural resources and has led both directly and indirectly to their gradual deterioration.

The main environmental problems associated with fishing have to do with overexploitation of resources and with destructive and/or non-selective fishing gear. Aquaculture has frequently been established on key ecosystems such as mangroves and swamps.

Beach tourism has been developed on the basis of huge real estate projects, resulting in major urban developments, investments in hotels and public infrastructure projects. This has resulted in damage to the environment and to the culture due to changes in land use and modification of the landscape. Moreover, certain tourist activities, such as watersports, have had a direct impact.

The environmental problems associated with the agricultural sector are related to improper use of chemicals (pesticides and fertilizers), inappropriate agricultural practices on land not suitable for farming and active deforestation to increase the land area available for agriculture or for extensive cattle-raising, all of which impacts the catchment area, as reflected in water contamination, erosion, sedimentation of coastal bodies of water and increased susceptibility to flooding in low-lying areas.

The industrial, oil and port facilities, as well as those of shrimp aquaculture, have frequently been established on key coastal ecosystems, such as wetlands, mangroves or sandbars, and these changes in land use have led to contamination and

other negative impacts, both from the facilities themselves and from the operations carried out in them.

Regulatory framework

There are 17 federal laws and eight federal regulations governing the coastal and marine zones. Moreover, there are nine different bodies that have direct or indirect authority in this area. Regulatory matters dealing with the coastal zone have always been handled with a sectoral approach, causing the legal framework controlling the zone to be extensive and inconsistent. The major shortcomings have to do with overregulation, inconsistencies among some instruments, gaps in the law, lack of coordination as regards areas of authority, sectoral conflicts of interest and a lack of monitoring and oversight.

There are environmental policy instruments, put in place by the law, that promote, restrict, guide or compel observance of certain clearly defined public policy objectives. In the specific case of coastal environmental policy, the applicable instruments are: the Ecological Code of the Territory, which includes a marine portion; the environmental impact evaluation; permits, licences, concessions and authorizations; the Mexican Official Standards and the protected natural areas.

These instruments need to be aligned in order to make their outcomes more efficient, and there is also a need to develop the necessary conditions for the application of other instruments in existence, such as those covering economic, financial and fiscal matters; self-regulation; certification; and the environmental audit.

Governance

The Constitution of Mexico makes the State the custodian of natural resources, with the land, bodies of water, wild flora and fauna and mineral resources, including those in marine environments, being considered as the heritage of the Nation. The Constitution also establishes the juridical bases of the environmental legislation for the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources.

Notwithstanding the complex system of social actors involved in the utilization of these resources, the responsibility for making determinations on their use and conservation falls to federal bodies. In consequence, the owners and users of the resources, and society itself, are not aware of the need for care of the environment, or else do not take responsibility for it.

Only recently has an environmental policy been developed that seeks to bring about compatibility between use and conservation, recognizing that, while natural resources support the life of society, usufruct thereof has been accompanied by the undermining of shared environmental values and services. It has to be recognized that the sectors in question are not always governed by environmental principles, but rather that policy decisions are taken that perpetuate the damage to the resources in the search for short-term economic benefits.

As for the participation of society, this occurs in very variable forms and to highly varying degrees. It is a heterogeneous process involving a diversity of actors: the federal, state and municipal governments, foundations, support groups, producers' organizations, chambers of commerce, professional associations, non-

governmental organizations, "ejido" public lands, rural and/or indigenous communities, and more.

In the coastal zone, which is in and of itself complex, there is a need to establish participatory mechanisms to involve society in inclusive processes of planning and decision-making for sustainable development.

Dissemination of information, training on the regulations applicable to the use of natural resources, development planning and the tracking of programmes and actions are also fundamental requirements if the community in general is to work alongside the authorities in monitoring compliance with environmental legislation.

Basic elements of a national environmental policy for the sustainable development of oceans and coasts

The policy should be:

Based on the big picture — in other words, it should involve government and society, science and technology, and also the sectoral and public interests in the creation and implementation of the programmes controlling the uses, sustainable development and protection of ecosystems, their resources and environmental services.

Coordinated both within and among institutions — that is to say, it should link the institutional actions and programmes, both vertically (within institutions) and horizontally (among institutions), on the basis of a general strategic framework, avoiding duplication of functions and overlapping of responsibilities, with efficiency and effectiveness.

Adaptive — meaning that it should be dynamic, able to change and adjust continually on the basis of evaluation and tracking of the outcomes of the strategic actions and institutional programmes that it contains.

Transparent — meaning that it should be open, based on relevant and accurate information on the actions and programmes undertaken, the resources applied and their results, allowing accountability and feedback from society.

Participatory and informed — namely, it should encourage wide involvement of different sectors of society, through participation by their members and public consultation in the decision-making process.

Multidisciplinary — in other words it should be inclusive and bring in the various areas of knowledge and science needed to understand the processes and phenomena that are present in the complex territorial environment of the coastal and marine zones.

Based on the best information available — that is to say, it should be based on evidence and information generated systematically, with scientific rigour to validate and underpin the decision-taking process.

Definition of the coastal zone

It was necessary to lay down the boundaries of the coastal zone so as to establish the territorial basis for implementation of the national environmental policy, in terms of its strategy and environmental outline, in order to define the persons and bodies involved and to specify the territorial limits of the requisite

management and coordination measures. It was also necessary to identify the coastal municipalities, and those that are impacted by the coast or that participate in the processes of coastal dynamics.

> "The coastal zone is the geographical area where there is mutual interaction among the marine environment, the terrestrial environment and the atmosphere. It comprises: (a) a continental portion made up of 263 coastal municipalities, 150 of them fronting on the sea and 113 immediately inland of the latter and subject to high or medium coastal influence; (b) a marine portion defined starting from the continental shelf and delimited by the -200 m isobath; and (c) an offshore portion represented by the national islands."

It is advisable to establish areas of high-priority attention at the regional level, based on criteria that are environmental, such as Protected National Areas and Priority Conservation Regions; or socio-economic, involving activities and infrastructure relating to industry, ports, tourism, fishing and aquaculture or urban development; or that are defined by risk and vulnerability, such as natural phenomena and those arising out of anthropogenic activities.

Strategic framework of the national environmental policy for the sustainable development of the oceans and coasts

Integration of the ocean and coastal areas, and of the resources and environmental services thereof, into the development of the country requires a range of tools to permit activation and continuation of long-term planning processes. To this end, it would be advisable for the Government of Mexico to include the following topics in the National Development Plan:

- Policies for the sustainable development of the oceans and coasts;
- The strategic role of Mexico's marine regions (Northern Pacific, Gulf of California, Southern Pacific, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea) in national development;
- The impact that the sectoral policies (agriculture, fishing, industry, tourism, transport and energy) have on the coastal zones;
- The importance of including in development plans and programmes (e.g. development of urban areas, tourism, ports, etc.) consideration of the risks that are natural to the coastal area, in order to reduce the vulnerability of the ecosystems, population and infrastructure to natural disasters;
- The advisability of making better use of existing funding schemes in sensitive areas such as the ocean and coastal zones;
- The international dimension of many coastal and marine issues of concern to Mexico, including the commitments undertaken by it in international treaties.

To the extent possible, the strategic planning for the sustainable use of the ocean and coastal resources will be prepared and carried out taking a dynamic, flexible and adaptive approach, in order to keep it viable and valid, with due allowance being made for the limitations and potential of the social organization, the productive system, the institutional framework and the conditions of the biophysical environment. However, this planning process is hampered by a set of problems that it has been difficult to overcome, notably:

- The lack in the National Development Plan of any national public policy offering a long-term view of the development and the protection of the oceans and coasts, and bringing together the various sectoral policies that impact these areas;
- Insufficient involvement by the users of the coastal and ocean resources in the decision-making process;
- Inconsistent legislation and public policies;
- A rigid bureaucratic and administrative system;
- A lack of financial and human resources for implementing integrated management initiatives at local and regional level;
- The lack of a national coordinating body.

These problems have to be tackled through a decentralized territorial approach, with coordination among the three arms of government. Solutions will have to be implemented locally in the context of a regional strategy. That will make the local administration responsible for handling environmental information, involving the users of the resources and regularly implementing integrated management plans.

The regional and watershed authorities will be responsible for drafting strategic proposals, promoting coordination among local authorities, ensuring compliance with national legislation and fostering cooperation among regions.

The authorities at the national level will be required to provide the statutory, legal and methodological framework needed in order to apply integrated management of the coastal and ocean resources. They will also have to provide the national picture in order to guide and support coherent activities at the regional and local levels.

The strategy for implementing an environmental policy for the oceans and coasts has been designed to respond to the main areas of interest defined at earlier diagnostic workshops that were organized to discuss the issue of management of the environment within the Mexican environmental sector, along the following main thematic lines:

Regulatory and institutional aspects

Steps must be taken to establish legal and administrative foundations to enable the official bodies of the three arms of government to act in concert with one another and with society, with a shared and agreed vision, working in a participatory and institutional manner within a context of sustainability, in accordance with a clear definition of powers, functions and responsibilities. To that end, it is proposed:

- To establish the juridical concept that will define the basic territorial area for the environmental management of the coastal zone;
- To strengthen the institutional context and select plans and programmes for coordinated, participatory and efficient handling of coastal environmental management at the national and local level.

Policy instruments

The environmental policy instruments that regulate, monitor and effectively establish the guidelines for natural resource management and productive and social development should view sustainable development in the oceans and coastal regions as a fundamental part of the national planning process.

The land and marine portions of the coastal areas and of the ocean waters over which the country exercises sovereignty can be integrated, by means of the Marine Ecological Code and the Regional Ecological Code, as first-level planning instruments for the development and operation of other environmental policy instruments. It will also be possible to establish a coastal region planning structure comprising the (i) Northern Pacific, (ii) Gulf of California, (iii) Southern Pacific, (iv) Gulf of Mexico and (v) Caribbean Sea as integral regions of ecological planning and regulation, with the coastal and ocean complexes being adopted and treated as Regional Environmental Management Units.

Ecosystems and biodiversity

Protection, conservation and sustainable use of the country's oceans and coasts must be ensured, based on the structural and functional characteristics of the ecosystems and taking into account the requirements and expectations of the social groups associated with them. Regional programmes must be set up to salvage, rehabilitate and/or restore marine and coastal ecosystems and include them as special management areas in the processes of spatial planning and planned economic development.

Production sectors and human settlements

Promotion of sustainable development of oceans and coasts will be based on scientific knowledge of the natural resources, in an effort to reverse the damage to coastal and ocean ecosystems, through the incorporation of ecological criteria, an overview of ecosystems, the best scientific evidence and the precautionary principle in the management of marine and coastal resources and development planning in each production sector.

Mechanisms must be established to control and prevent environmental damage due to both natural causes and human activity — as a result of production activities and the settlement of urban and rural centres in this zone — and to deal with the effects thereof on the population through a model for regional planning based on the elaboration of regional ecological legislation.

In planning and actions related to the development and use of coastal and ocean zones, it is necessary to mainstream the perspective arising from the commitments established in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in order to reduce vulnerability, foresee disasters and carry out integrated risk management in these zones.

Governance and social participation

The conditions must be ensured for effective, appropriate administration and monitoring of the coastal zone in the development of production activities, based on institutional capacity-building and coordination of the three branches of government, in order to guarantee compliance with the regulatory framework, with

transparency and social participation through the development of environmental awareness and the dissemination of results.

Information systems (scientific research, education and information)

Efforts must be made to promote the development of an inclusive, accessible information system for guiding, communicating and coordinating scientific and technological research, with the aim of fostering the generation and exchange of knowledge, in order to support decision-making, environmental management and spatial planning, implement sustainable production systems and support the evaluation and monitoring of the environmental situation of oceans and coasts.

Enhanced training of human resources and enhanced institutional development and consolidation will be the key elements in the generation of national and regional scientific research, as will development of decision-making capacities.

Greater institutional efforts must be made to promote environmental education and public awareness between the production sectors and society in general, to raise awareness and encourage informed participation in environmental management and to generate behaviour conducive to sustainability of the coastal zone.

General outline of the environmental policy for oceans and coasts

Under each subject heading, the principal points of an environmental policy are proposed, which constitute the specific actions to be carried out; in other words, the operational thrust of the strategy. These points are summarized in a general manner below.

Regulatory and institutional framework

- Provision of a legal definition of the coastal zone
- Introduction of integrated coastal management into the administrative and legal framework
- Analysis of the desirability of drafting specific legislation (an Act) or complementing the existing regulatory framework regarding oceans and coasts
- Strengthening of the institutions responsible for administration of the coastal zone
- Promotion of regulations on specific topics through official environmental norms

Policy instruments

- Preparation of regional, municipal and Marine Ecological Codes and Spatial-planning Codes as basic instruments for environmental planning and the development of Mexico's coastal zone
- The Ecological Codes and Spatial-planning Codes will be the basis for coordinating the other local instruments such as Urban Development Programmes, Environmental Impact Assessments, and Integrated Coastal Management Zones, with the aim of simplifying the issuing of authorizations, concessions, certificates, licences and permits in the area of spatial planning

- Promotion of the application of economic instruments
- Promotion of environmental certification of coastal businesses and municipalities

Ecosystems and biodiversity

- Strengthening of mechanisms to address and resolve disputes concerning the assessment of environmental impact on coastal ecosystems
- Achievement of effective operation of the marine and coastal Protected Natural Areas
- Capacity-building for the protection of priority coastal and marine species and their habitats
- Promotion of conservation and protection of key or priority coastal ecosystems such as coastal lagoons, mangroves, coral reefs and marine pastures
- Preparation of specific regulations for the management of island systems
- Elaboration of guidelines for the management of preventive and control procedures for island systems, to guard against the environmental impact of invasive species and transfaunation

Production sectors and human settlements

- Promotion of sustainable development in the coastal zone based on the latter's specificities and the suitability of its land for production development
- Establishment of agreements relating to the planning of coastal economic development between private enterprise, the government and the different sectors of society
- Promotion of production development taking into account environmental criteria
- Prevention of pollution of the coastal zone and reduction of the environmental impact thereof
- Prevention and monitoring of pollution of the marine environment generated by land-based activities
- Promotion of sustainable development of the coastal and cruise-related tourist industry
- Promotion of sustainable practices in the development of fishing and marine activities
- Development of infrastructure and provision of port and maritime services, with coordination between the Ministry of Communications and Transport (SCT), the Ministry of the Navy (SEMAR) and the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT)
- Achievement of efficient management of coastal land under concession (Federal Maritime/Land Zones)

Governance and social participation

- Strengthening of the process of deconcentration and decentralization
- Support for the development of technical and institutional capacities of local governments
- Establishment of an inter-ministerial committee for integrated ocean and coastal management
- Establishment and development of the regional councils for ocean and coastal management
- Implementation of integrated coastal management programmes
- Promotion of participation in decision-making of IP, non-governmental organizations dealing with social, environmental and indigenous issues and farming and fishing organizations
- Achievement of a collective vision and collective action in decision-making and in solutions for a sustainable future in coastal and marine regions
- Strengthening of civilian protection and disaster prevention systems
- Preparation of vulnerability and risks maps for coastal and marine areas

Information systems on oceans and coasts (scientific research, education and information)

- Implementation of a national programme of scientific research for coasts and oceans
- Creation of a national system for environmental information on coasts and oceans
- Promotion of scientific knowledge of coastal and marine environments, focused on the ecosystem
- Promotion of scientific research and technological development as an instrument of environment policy
- Promotion of human resource development
- Fostering of integration of institutional networks at both national and regional level
- Elaboration of a programme for monitoring environmental quality, quality of life and economic development in coastal regions
- Promotion of awareness and a deeper understanding of environmental matters among coastal inhabitants.

Preparing for integrated coastal zone management

The national environmental policy for the sustainable development of oceans and coasts lays down guidelines for sustainable development through the use and appropriate exploitation of natural marine and coastal resources. The general thrust of the environmental policy is aimed at aligning and coordinating public and

sectoral policies, by proposing a management model that is holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary and participatory through:

- Promotion of an effective regulatory framework, focused on ecosystems
- Institutional strengthening, administrative deconcentration and decentralization and capacity-building
- Coordinated development of the coastal zone within a long-term land-use planning framework
- Effective application of policy instruments and the precautionary principle in regulating development
- Conservation of the structure and function (biodiversity and productivity) of coastal ecosystems and preservation of key habitats and ecosystems
- Promotion of participation and shared responsibility of society in decision-making based on the best available information
- Regional integration and integrated management of coastal zones.

Mexico has thus set about meeting the commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio in 1992 (Earth Summit) and those of the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in 2002 in Johannesburg, in line with the general provisions of the Constitution and the General Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection Act. In particular it will:

- Continue the technical participation of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) in the meetings organized in the framework of the 12 international conventions and forums relating to oceans and coasts that Mexico has signed or attended, particularly the work carried out under the auspices of the United Nations with regard to the oceans and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including the important technical work derived from the Global Programme of Action, the Second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the GPA (IGR-2) and the United Nations Oceans Process (UNICPOLOS);
- Continue with the technical work carried out in the framework of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention).